

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

**Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania**

February 3, 2023

The President. Well, folks, it's good to be almost home. [*Laughter*] But, as Chris can tell you, this is—I'd have never been elected in the first place, when I look around this room—and it's not hyperbole to suggest—without at least a dozen of you in this room. It would have never happened.

Now, granted, you were 12 years old when you started helping me. [*Laughter*] But it really matters. Eddie, it's great to see you, pal. And so many of you in this room.

And you know, back 100 years ago, when I got started, there was no commercial television in the State of Delaware, one of the few States. And because it was just Philadelphia television—there was no commercial television—in New Jersey either—[*laughter*]*—*in the bottom half of the State.

And so the way I was able to win and to raise the money to win, as Eddie will remember, is I raised most of the money—most of the help I got was here in Philly. And I was smart enough to marry a Philly girl. [*Laughter*]

But—and by the way, you know, my—Jill is out in California now campaigning. And she told me last week—she said, "I hope you don't mind, but I'm going to—I'm going to the Eagles games." [*Laughter*] I said, "No, I don't mind." I said, "How about me?" She said, "No, I'm taking little Hunter"—Beau's—my deceased son's son.

She said, "Because, Joe, you just get in the way." [*Laughter*] "You cause too much trouble."

So I just got informed recently she's going to the play—going to the Super Bowl. And so, say goodbye. [*Laughter*] And you know, I'm not allowed to go.

But—and by the way, if you—almost everybody here is from Philly or knows Philly very well. You are the most informed and obnoxious fans in the world.

Audience member. Yeah, Eagles!

The President. But that's—I'm a Philly fan too. So, you know what I mean? I'm just not as obnoxious as she is about it. [*Laughter*] You—I mean, it's really absolutely amazing, I mean, the certitude. And—anyway, it's another story. [*Laughter*]

And by the way, if I were not a fan of Philly professional sports, I'd be sleeping alone. [*Laughter*] You all think I'm kidding. No, those are no joke. No, I am not kidding. She is—she—
—

But look, it's—I want to thank all of you. I wouldn't be standing here without the people in this room and—for the last number of years. And I really mean it. You stepped up for me when no one else was stepping up for me.

And the other piece of it was, I remember when I got elected back in—100 years ago, in '72, as a 29-year-old kid. I was asked, "What was the secret?" And I know Chris knows this, because he heard a lot about it. If I had been able to win in the State that—I think it was 64 percent of the vote was garnered by Nixon, and beat a guy who had been the most popular incumbent in the history of the State of Delaware at the time and a guy who endorsed me the next time I ran, Caleb Boggs, the—Jim, if—there had to be some secret.

So they'd keep asking—no joke—everybody that'd run, they'd go, "What's the secret?" Like there had to be some secret.

And I finally figured it out how to best express it. And it's the good news and the bad news. You've got to know what's worth losing over. You've got to know what's worth losing over.

And because you've been able to stick with me sometimes when I've caused you great difficulty in some of the decisions I've made, that's what I've done. And that's for real. What's worth losing over?

And there's—when I ran this time—and this is about what I think we have to do—continue to do—I decided that when those folks—and you and I talked about this, Eddie—when those folks came out of those fields in Charlottesville, carrying those torches and Nazi flags and singing all that White supremacist—anyway. And a young woman was killed. I spoke to her mom. And the President—former President was asked, you know, "What do you have to say?" He said, "Well, there are very good people on both sides."

I had no intention of running again. I really didn't. I had just lost my son. I had no intention of running. But I decided that's what I was going to do.

And here's the point: The point is that even those of you who've done incredibly well financially, you all came to this party the same way, which is that the way to build a country is from the bottom up and the middle out. Trickle-down is fine if you're at the top of the trickle, but it doesn't go very—[laughter]—no, I mean it. I mean it sincerely.

And the—when we build from the bottom up and the middle out, poor folks get a shot, the middle class does well, and the wealthy still do very well. Still do very well. So that's the way in which we started this—this off. And people didn't think that it would go very far.

But I—and the second point I want to make to you is this. And I want to thank you for your—I'm not joking when I say this—your patience with me. Because one of the things that has been—I—you've heard me talk about—I think, as a student of history, and particularly Presidential history, I've always been fascinated by it, for real—is that once every three, four, or five generations, there's a fundamental shift in world politics and national politics.

The last time we were at a place like this was at the end of World War II. We set up a new way in which to govern the world and govern ourselves. And—but that era is over.

What happens the last 4 or 5 years and what will happen the next 3 or 4 years are going to determine what this country looks like for the next four or five decades. Not a joke. We're laying down a foundation, because the world is changing—dramatically changing. And we have a choice.

When I was with Xi Jinping—I spent more time with him than any other world leader has. Now it's over—they keep very close—they just keep a record—and it's now over 89 hours, 68 of which were in person. It's over a 10-year period. Because back when Barack was President, he knew—we knew Xi Jinping was going to be President. It wasn't appropriate for a President to get to know and spend time with a Vice President, so I did.

I traveled over 17,000 miles with him. And we were in the—on the Tibetan Plateau. And he asked me—we always had an interpreter, a simultaneous interpreter, each of us. So that's all we'd have. And he asked me—he said, "Can you define America for me?" And I said, "Yes, I can, in one word: possibilities." Possibilities.

Because that's what made us the "ugly Americans," because people—we think we can do anything if we set our mind to it. But it's also who we are. And it's because of our incredible diversity that we've been able to do so much, in my view.

And so what we decided to do, I knew—and many of you knew, because you helped me—what we wanted to do. Chris was a gigantic help. And, Jim, I wouldn't be standing here without you, pal. I would not be standing here without you. Not a joke.

But the point is that I just knew we had to invest in ourselves. How the hell can you be the most successful, powerful nation in the world and have third-rate infrastructure? We used to be number one in the world. We're number 9—or actually 14. Fourteen in the world, in terms of—

How can you grow a nation without having the finest infrastructure in the world? How can you attract business and commerce and keep things moving?

And so we were told we couldn't get it done, but we got it done. Because the—a vote cast by the gentlelady from the State of California—[laughter]—who happens to be Vice President. The great thing about being Vice President: Every time you vote, you win. [Laughter] Every time you vote, you win. I told her that at the beginning.

But you know, it matters. It matters that we invested—America, we used to invest 2 percent of our GDP in research and development. Two percent of our GDP. But about 25 years ago, we stopped. We invest 0.7 percent of our—

We are the innovative country in the world. We have been. Well, we're starting to do it again. And we came up with the CHIPS and Science Act. Well, guess what? It's over \$320 billion being spent.

We've created more jobs, more—where is it written that says we can't be the manufacturing capital of the world? I'm not joking. Where the hell is that written? We've created 750,000 manufacturing jobs in America. And think of about—

But I'm not saying it to, like, "We did this." What I'm saying it about—the reason I'm saying it is as follows: So many people have lost faith—Americans have lost faith in America's ability to do anything or do everything.

You know, when we were growing up, there wasn't anything we believed, if we set our mind to, we couldn't do. I mean literally. Literally.

But you look at the deep polling data—not about "who," but about "what"—people began to wonder whether we can still do great things. They began—no, I'm serious.

You know, I was asked by a group of commentators, the serious commentators, off the record, a long—a 3-hour meeting I had with them.

And they said, "If you could do one thing, what would you do?" I said, "I'd cure cancer." They said, "Why would you cure cancer?" I said: "Well, beyond it being worthwhile, no one believes we can do it. I want to demonstrate we can still do anything."

There's not a thing we've ever set our mind to, ever, as a nation, we haven't accomplished. Never once. No, I mean it. It sounds like hyperbole.

But so part of what we both have been trying to do is reestablish faith in America and the American people. And they're tough. And they're getting back up on their feet. They're getting back up on their feet. We don't deserve the credit.

Think of—think what's happened. How about all those towns that, in fact, the factories closed down and everything shut down? They not only—I mean, again, I'm going to get Ed in trouble, but Ed and I have talked about this. How did we lose all those blue-collar workers? What happened? What the hell happened? Well, guess what? We stopped talking to them.

A factory shuts down in a town in the Midwest or a town in Columbus, Ohio, when the General Motors plant shut down. All those people are out of work. But guess what? They lost their pride. They lost their sense of self. They lost this notion.

And how many families, as you campaigned through the Midwest—and some of you are from there—in fact have the kid come up and say—do well in school, do well in college—and come back and say: "Mom, I've got to move. There's no work here. There's nothing here"?

So the whole point of what we're trying to do is change the attitude and demonstrate there's nothing beyond our capacity. And I think we're on the right track.

I think because of you and the help you've given—I'm not saying we've done everything right, and I'm going to make more mistakes over the next period of time. But we've got the right attitude, in my view. And that is: We can do anything. And we can—and it can be made in America.

The idea that I'm getting criticized because we are—we are having so much progress? [Laughter] No. In Europe, Japan, why are we leading—[inaudible]? Well, guess what? I'll be damned, as long as I'm President, we're going to be the end of a supply chain again. We're the beginning of the supply. No, I mean it.

And last thing I'll say, and then we'll do questions: One of the things you've allowed me to do is you've allowed me to put together a foreign policy team and talk about what I think is the most important element of American foreign policy. And that is—you know, the former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, said it: We are the essential nation. It sounds like hyperbole, like we're beating our chests, but that's not the case.

I've done foreign policy—I did most of my work with—for Barack—was in foreign policy. I was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and all that. But I never fully realized, until I became President, how critical—I showed up at the first G-7 meeting of the major European powers and NATO, and I sat down, in England, and I said—this the God's truth—I said, "America is back." And Macron turned to me and said, "For how long?" And then Scholz—Olaf—said to me—from Germany—"What would you do, Mr. President, if, in fact, we adjourned tonight, you woke up in the morning and found out the British Parliament was stormed, they tried to overrule the election of a Prime Minister, and two cops were killed? What would you think?"

Think about it. Think about that—how we would view.

And one of the reasons why we're able to do things is—now, I've spent, and we both have spent—but I've spent personally well over 160 hours face to face with other world leaders, 90 of those in person, calling meetings of European community, Japan, South Korea, Australia, India, the Quad. And they're looking desperately for our leadership. Jim, you know that. And this is a guy that's helped me a great deal on Africa.

And so my generic point is, I think we're once again reestablishing not only our—I'm not going to get into "moral"—but our—not only our political leadership, but what we talk about in terms of what we want to do with the rest of the world and for the rest of the world.

So I think we're in a position that I haven't felt, not because we're President and Vice President, but because of the nature of the moment. Think about it. No matter who is President, things are going to change radically in the next 15 years. And the question is, are we going to be leading the pack, or we're going to be the end of it? Not a joke.

I think we're positioned in a way to reestablish our leadership in the world and do it fairly.

As I point out to our friends in the EU: "Don't get angry we're going to going to be the beginning of the supply chain, because that's the only guarantee you'll have access. You'll have access."

So I'm talking too long, and I apologize. But that's not a surprise to anybody in this room. *[Laughter]*

But I really, really, really think, as my mother would say, with the grace of God and the good will of the neighbors and the crick not rising, we're going to have an opportunity to do some really good things.

And concluding by saying: The stuff that we've done so far—I'm not buying all the stuff that's most significant—President said so and so. But the things we've done so far, we've been trying to do for years.

Medicare: Seniors are paying four to eight hundred dollars a month for insulin. And several million need it. And guess what? We told them, and all of a sudden, they didn't believe it until it actually happened January 1. No more than 35 bucks a month for your insulin. The people are going, "Whoa!"

Well, you got 200,000 kids in America needing insulin or they're going to die. They're being cut out. We've got to get that back. We've got to make sure we do—guess what? Nobody realized that if you're on Medicare—the law we passed: Beginning next January, no senior will, under any circumstance, no matter how much their drugs cost—and, as you know, some of the drugs are 12-, 14,000 bucks a year, the cancer drugs—will never have to pay more than \$2,000 a year.

Well, the point I'm making is this: People know generically what we're doing, but they've not felt it. They don't—they don't see it. But they're going to be able to start to see it now—see it now—not only in the physical structures we're going to be dealing with and doing, things we're doing in the Recovery Act, but also in the CHIPS Act.

And by the way, those jobs—guess what? Those jobs are union jobs to build these facilities. And there's going to be, just for the one project in—outside of Columbus—there's going to be 5,000 of those jobs. I mean, excuse me, 7,000—3,000 of which are permanent—when they build these "fabs," they call them.

Well, guess what the average salary is? 132,000 bucks. And guess what? You don't need a college degree. You don't need a college degree.

So there's so much change in—that people—and what we have to do is, we have to get working-class people to say we see them. We see them. That used to be automatic. Not anymore. Not anymore. And we can do it.

And by the way, the last thing: We've done this. We've done this and paid for every single penny. And I've cut the deficit—the debt by \$1.7 trillion in 2 years, more than anybody ever has.

Because we're saying—some—just start paying your fair share. I hope we have a couple billionaires in here. *[Laughter]* There's close to a thousand. You're paying an average of 3 percent. I don't want you to pay 90 percent again, like it was—allegedly what it was 40 years ago. Just a little bit. Just by making sure that 55 of the top Fortune 500 companies who made \$40 billion paid a minimum of 15 percent—less than a schoolteacher—we paid for it all.

So, folks, look, we have to do two things: lay out what we've done; tell them what more we have to get done and how we're going to pay for it; and lastly, point out these MAGA—not all—this ain't your father's Republican Party. Okay?

And there's a lot of good Republicans still left. Conservatives—hell, I disagree with them—but there are more than a handful of what I call the MAGA Republicans, the—extreme Republicans.

I just met with the Speaker of the House. Well, the Speaker of the House, I asked him: The first bill you want to introduce is going to increase the debt by \$1.2 trillion. No pay-for.

And by the way, you have a circumstance where they want to eliminate the IRS. Sounds great. Except they want a 30-percent sales tax on every single thing. They want the poor and the middle class to pay everything.

No, I—I got to go on the list.

So, the other thing we have to do is keep pointing out what the other team wants, what we're going to do and what they want. And I think we have more credibility by saying what we're going to do.

And if my mother were here, she'd say, "Joey, hush up and take some questions." [*Laughter*]

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:54 p.m. at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Christopher A. Coons; former Gov. Edward G. Rendell of Pennsylvania; Rep. James E. Clyburn; Susan Bro, mother of Heather D. Heyer, who was killed in a vehicular attack in Charlottesville, VA, on August 12, 2017; former Presidents Donald J. Trump and Barack Obama; President Xi Jinping of China; President Emmanuel Macron of France; Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany; and Speaker of the House of Representatives Kevin O. McCarthy. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee reception in Philadelphia, PA.

Locations: Philadelphia, PA.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Biden, R. Hunter, Jr.; Bro, Susan; Clyburn, James E.; Coons, Christopher A.; Harris, Kamala D.; Macron, Emmanuel; McCarthy, Kevin O.; Obama, Barack ; Rendell, Edward G.; Scholz, Olaf; Trump, Donald J.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: China, President; Democratic National Committee; Football; France, President; Germany, Chancellor; Global supply chain disruptions, efforts to address; Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Infrastructure improvements; Job creation and growth; Labor movement and organized labor; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Medicare and Medicaid programs; Pennsylvania : President's visits; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Research and development; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Vice President; Virginia, 2017 civil unrest and violence in Charlottesville.

DCPD Number: DCPD202300084.